

OUR ADMINISTRATION.

BY THE EDITOR.

OUR present administration seems to be endowed with a special talent of everywhere following the wrong course in foreign politics. Our President has been accused of being guided by pro-British sentiments, and it has been claimed in editorials of the *Chicago Examiner* that President Wilson is British by parentage and education. It is perhaps excusable that he should have acquired prejudice in favor of Great Britain, but it is a misfortune that he has become president at such a critical time as the present, for he has followed a policy which is submissive to Great Britain and extremely unfair to Germany. We do not doubt that he is honest and well meaning and that he has endeavored to preserve a neutral attitude, but we must say that our administration has erred from the very beginning and has entered a path which, with all its love for peace, may, by its vacillation and doctrinary insistence on principles, lead to war; and a war under present conditions is decidedly against the will of the country. Our policy in Mexico is, of course, of less moment than our policy with the European powers, but even here it has been bungling and wavering in the strangest way. It has been a combination of a headstrong insistence on principles, doctrinary but unpractical, and an obvious weakness which, however, threatens to develop into stubbornness. When we ought to have created order we treated Mexico as a nation of responsible people whose rights we do not dare to interfere with, and thereby added confusion to the situation. Our President favors a party that cleverly calls itself constitutionalistic; he does not consider that a true constitutionalism is impossible in a country where illiteracy is the rule.

In our relations with England we have been submissive when she stopped our normal trade not only with Germany but also with the neutral European powers who could sell harmless commodi-

ties and foodstuffs to Germany. Thus our cotton trade has been ruined for this year. We ought to have insisted from the start, most vigorously, on the freedom of the seas, and we ought to have dared to protect our trade in non-contraband goods, especially cotton; and, to show that we were serious in our claims regarding the American right to trade not only with neutrals but also with Germany, we should have sent our navy along with our cotton ships, even at the risk of a possible war. England would not, however, have ventured a war with the United States at the present time. She would have acceded to our just demand to trade with Germany, or at least with the neutral countries of Europe, even at the risk of our goods being sent on to Germany. The Americans of a hundred years ago showed manliness, but our generation acquiesces in English supremacy over the seas and meekly submits to English demands.

Our demand on England would have been fair, and not only was it our right to make it, it was our duty to insist on it. The idea that we should not suffer Great Britain to prescribe to us where and in what goods we may carry on our commerce, is by no means uncommon in the United States. As evidence I will quote a few lines from an editorial written by George W. O'Reilly and published in the *Chicago American* (August 25, 1915):

"England has stopped our shipment of cotton. Let us stop our shipment of arms. . . . Let us clearly define and courageously defend our rights.

"Are we an independent nation or an English colony? Have we a president who is a British subject, or an American citizen?

"Are we quite sure that this is after all the home of the brave and the land of the free? If so, now is the time to demonstrate our bravery and assert our freedom.

"Let us say to Germany and England alike, 'There are our rights, defy them if you dare.'"

These sentiments, though they are those of a considerable fraction of American citizens, are not endorsed by our administration. Our President sends strong notes to Germany in which he preaches to the German government on the principles of humanity and insists on the abandonment of Germany's submarine warfare; but he does not dare to say boo to England.

The United States has never been highly respected in England, and the reason is because our submissiveness is too well known. The English regard us as second or third class English subjects; and on closer study I have found that even the colonials are not

regarded as quite equal to native English people, and that the Americans are considered inferior even to them.

While our administration has failed to protect our non-contraband trade from England it has given full permission to carry on contraband trade in the interest of England and her allies. This contraband trade is a crime for several reasons. First, and perhaps most important, is the fact that in this country about one-third of its citizens are of German birth or descent and thus are closely connected with Germany. Their brothers and cousins are to be shot down by the ammunition which American manufacturers are furnishing to the allied nations, and German-Americans, citizens of this country, resent very much that our administration should insist on the propriety of manufacturing contraband goods at the behest and in the plain interest of England.

The second reason why the manufacture of munitions should be prohibited in this country is the unfairness of helping one party in the war at the expense of another. Moreover, even apart from the influence of the strong German element in this country, the German people have always been in most friendly relations with the United States while England has always been our enemy. We have never had serious quarrels with any nation except England. Our very existence as an independent nation is due to a revolution against English rule, and for more or less similar reasons we waged a second war against her one hundred years ago. The only menace that looms over our political horizon is that of an English invasion and an attempt to make us once more an English dependency. Canada is a constant danger to us, offering, as she does, a boundary of thousands of miles across which, in the event of war, English armies could break into our territory. It is true that the outcome, in a war with Canada, would in the long run be in favor of the United States, but we ought to be awake to the danger, and should know that England would not hesitate to take every advantage in the event of strained political conditions.

The third reason why our manufacture and trade in war munitions is wrong is a purely humanitarian one. We pretend to favor peace, but for the sake of large profits we are glad to furnish instruments of murder to one party, and thus contribute our quota to prolong the war. The great profits, however, do not go to the people; they go only to a few millionaires. If we could furnish the same amount of war material to the other side it might be somewhat less inexcusable, although even then it would be inhuman to allow a few millionaires to fatten themselves on the prolonged

bloodshed in Europe. These things make all our prayers for peace hypocritical, nay worse, contemptible, and it is certainly a shame on our administration to regard our manufacture of munitions as a justifiable and purely neutral act. Mr. Wilson seems to think that when Germany and Austria-Hungary attack us, England, France, Russia and Japan will supply us with war material. But if the case were reversed, if England and Japan should attack us, should we be justified in expecting Germany to come to our aid?

There is, however, another feature of the administration's policy which will bring dire results in its train. Germany has followed the principle of rendering herself, as far as possible, independent of foreign trade in time of war. The wisdom and foresight of this policy has been clearly brought out in the present struggle. The plan of starving the country into submission has proved a failure, and Germany is commercially almost as strong as it has ever been in times of peace. In fact the British blockade acts like a high prohibitive tariff, for the Germans are obliged to have all their goods manufactured within their own domain. German money remains in Germany, and the foreign countries (including Great Britain) which used to deal with Germany suffer more thereby than Germany herself. Germany's chief difficulty is in being cut off from certain raw products needed in her industries, the most important of these being cotton.

Now what will Germany do in the future to protect herself from again being cut off from the cotton market? She will conclude a close alliance, both industrial and military, with Austria-Hungary and Turkey, and these three empires will form a compact geographical territory extending through several zones. After the war Germany will see to it that cotton plantations are developed within this territory, either in southern Hungary or in the Turkish empire, from which she will at all times be able to draw the supply for her factories in Saxony without hindrance from the English navy. And with the development of cotton lands of her own Germany will, to a large extent at least, be independent of our output; she will put a tariff on cotton, and very soon our trade with her in this commodity—a trade which has been of considerable importance in the past—will be as dead as if it never had been. And who will be to blame for this but our administration?

In still another respect the present policy has been short-sighted. The Germans have always furnished the best of material for citizenship to this country, and they constitute a most virile and vigorous element. The Germans among us have always been prominent in

our country in times of crisis and national defense, and have played an important part in its history. They have always been most reliable patriots and have never, never, been clannish. The attitude of our present administration is so un-American in its identification of American interests with those of Great Britain, that our German citizens will be compelled to stand together, and, if they do, it is obvious that they will represent the true American attitude toward this Anglomania which, like a cancer, is eating away the marrow from the backbone of our nation.